



# The Construction of Energy Security in China

## A discourse analysis

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## Abstract

The thesis conducts a discourse analysis of how China constructs its energy security from within, especially the security of the rare earth elements and related industries. After giving a background for the energy transition as a general trend and energy security as a crucial issue for China, especially of some certain mineral resources. The research is guided by the theoretical framework of the securitization theory and the analytical framework of the critical discourse analysis.

After analyzing certain extracts from the context of Chinese discourse, this thesis argues that narrative constructed already in the society and its audience, plays an important role when arousing the audience's acceptance to a comprehended framing of existential threat. Security language is used to communicate a sense of urgency in order to influence a discussion and attention from the audience. It is concluded from the thesis that there is not necessary to generate a completely new construction of discourse to ensure energy security. Instead, adopting previously roots and existed narratives may also be effective to convince the audience to accept extra-ordinary measures by legitimizing some existing or potential moves to encounter the so-called existential threat.

Key Words: energy security, energy transition, discourse analysis, securitization theory

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## Introduction

Since the beginning of the 21st century, countries around the world have actively participated in addressing global climate change issues which are centered on carbon emissions. Reducing carbon emissions is so fundamentally crucial amid challenges and difficulties because the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has issued the strongest warning so far against damages and disasters of the climate change. It means only rapid and far-reaching changes and decisive actions in the world economy could help to prevent the situation that the global temperature rising 1.5°C higher than that before the industrial era. Otherwise, if carbon emissions continue even at the current level, the global temperature increase may exceed 1.5°C around 2040 (Ecowatch, 2018). Furthermore, according to the IPCC, “for global warming from 1.5°C to 2°C, risks across energy, food, and water sectors could overlap spatially and temporally, creating new hazards, exposures, and vulnerabilities that could affect increasing numbers of people and regions” (IPCC, 2018).

In response, in the context of sustainable development, adaption and mitigation actions are in great need globally. Actually, climate change and its relevant issues have been gradually adopted and framed as a security issue by many countries, including China (Dewulf, 2013). Though China has not labeled climate change a national security issue yet and considers it more at the level of economic development, still Chinese government recognizes that climate change is a serious and urgent issue concerning security which needs quick response and further actions (Scheffran, Brzoska, Brauch, Schilling and Link, 2013). Furthermore, it is noted by IPCC that such measures as “assessing current and emerging mitigation and adaptation options, opportunities for technological and social transformation; enabling innovation and transitions at various scales; linking innovation and technology transfer and diffusion to emissions reduction and adaptation outcomes” are suggested to take prompt and effective actions (2020). Among them, in regard to sustainable development, energy transition is a fundamental way to achieve carbon reduction goals.

At present, countries are actively laying out a new round of technological and

industrial revolutions. To be specific, the third energy transition with low-carbon and renewable energy as its core is ongoing. What is more, the development of renewable energy industries and low-carbon technologies will reshape competitiveness of global industries internationally (Lu & Fan, 2010, p. 37). However, the development of low-carbon and renewable energy industries poses new challenges to the global supply of mineral resources, especially such essential but limited resources as rare earth, indium, etc., which are not only necessary for the development of certain green energy sectors but also are of strategic relevance to energy security in general (Du, et al., 2020).

Though China is usually considered as a resources-rich country in general when comparing with many other countries (Freeman, 2015), still facing a shortage of some mineral resources, China's economic development has been restricted by sufficiency and efficiency of the use of mineral resources, especially relying heavily on imports for such raw materials as oil, uranium, high-quality iron, manganese, chromium and copper (Global Times, 2018). In addition, increasing concerns have emerged about resources shortage and energy security. Hence, it is crucial for China to deal with problems between environmental protection, economic development and energy security. In the 13th five-year plan (2016-2020), the central government highlighted green development as one of the main national development strategies. Furthermore, according to the report of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (2017), it is pointed out that green development is the key to the construction of ecological civilization in China. Moreover, building a clean, low-carbon, safe and efficient energy system, and strengthening energy-saving and environmental protection industries, clean production industries, and clean energy industries are important means for China to actively participate in global environmental governance and implement emission reduction commitments. Hence, it has been put great emphasis on handling the relation between energy security and green development from within.

Nowadays, some emerging strategic minerals can be considered as advantageous mineral resources in China, such as rare earths, tungsten, molybdenum, indium, etc. These minerals form an important material basis for a new global technological

revolution (Seaman, 2019). In the coming future, in response to energy transition, demands of emerging strategic industries will continue to grow. Accordingly, this poses a challenge to the security of some certain mineral resources which deemed “critical” by states, for it may lead to a global struggle that speed up their depletion. Existing studies show that energy transition has become a trend already (IEA, 2019; Energy Reform Institute NDRC, et al., 2019), which means a focus towards the relationship between new energy and relevant emerging industries accordingly has been widely accepted. Then, it is not hard to understand that energy security issue ensues, since these resources and industries are not only important to deal with the climate change but also crucial to national security considerations. However, there have been few studies from the perspective of energy security of some certain mineral resources when being guided by the securitization theory and adopting the critical discourse analysis approach interactively. Clearly, how to ensure the security of these certain important mineral resources and even national security in the process of energy transition is an urgent problem that China is facing now and is also of great value to be studied in detail further. Therefore, research question of this thesis is: How is China's energy security constructed from within in the context of an ongoing energy transition?

Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, as major proponents of the securitization theory proposed by the Copenhagen School, defined securitization as “the discursive process through which an intersubjective understanding is constructed within a political community to treat something as an existential threat...and to enable a call for urgent and exceptional measures to deal with the threat” (2003). This suggests that securitization occurs in a broad discursive space, where intersubjective structures of meaning are called up to legitimize particular moves (Weldes 1999; Guzzini 2012). Thus, securitization needs its securitizing actors to employ the political power to define and frame certain issues, make this framing being accepted by the audience. In other words, the Copenhagen School attempts to study securitization by focusing on language that takes the form of presenting something as an existential threat to a referent object, which is “a combination of language and society, of both intrinsic features of a speech

and the group that authorizes and recognizes that speech” (Buzan et al., 1998). In terms of the focus of this thesis, the securitization theory can therefore be a useful tool to understand how China constructs its energy security, especially that of “critical” mineral resources and why such framing and development are taking place in terms of gains and losses in the course of energy transition.

This thesis will be structured in the following way. The focus of this thesis is energy security in China by construction of discourse of China from within. What is more, all the themes mentioned in this introductory section will be revisited in greater detail later in the thesis. Next, the literature review chapter (Chapter 1) will mainly focus on how existing studies conclude energy transition as a widely accepted trend in China, the relationship of energy transition and energy security of some certain resources concerning strategic emerging industries, and necessity of constructing energy security discourse in this transition. Then, a theoretical framework for the study of energy security debates, based on the securitization theory proposed by the Copenhagen School will be constructed (Chapter 2). Also, criticism will be included in this chapter. The methodology (Chapter 3) will include such sections as case selection, choice of methods, choice of data, choice of analytical tools, and limitations. Then the analysis (Chapter 4) will take place by adopting analytical approach of critical discourse analysis to investigate the problem formulation as mentioned before. Finally, the conclusion section will summarize findings and answer the research question in short.

## Chapter One: Literature Review

Energy transition is an imported concept in China’s context of development. However, there is an abundance of research being conducted on energy transition in

China. The purpose of this chapter is to review literature mainly about understandings of energy transition, the relationship of energy transition and security of some certain resources concerning strategic emerging industries, and necessity of constructing energy security discourse in this transition.

## 1.1 Energy transition

First of all, generally speaking, though energy transition in China is apparently facing challenges, regarding the significance of energy transition from a global perspective, Zhao (2009) presents a domestically widely accepted opinion that “the structural energy transition from traditional fossil energy to new and renewable energy, from high-carbon model to low-carbon one is the general trend”. But in the long run, when and how the new energy transition will be completed ultimately depend not only on the breakthroughs in new energy supply-side industries and technologies, but also on the revolutionary changes on the demand side (p.35). Specifically, some scholars point out that the development of new energy industry and low-carbon technology will be an important engine for driving world economic growth, and a significant way and symbol for countries in the world to reshape their global industrial competitiveness respectively (Ma, et al, 2018).

It is noted by Yergin that “the objective of energy security is to assure adequate, reliable supplies of energy at reasonable prices and in ways that do not jeopardize major national values and objectives” (1988, p. 111). Although energy transition is a general trend, due to different positions, there are still some differences in the definition and interpretation of energy transition. Some focus on geographical replacement of oil supply in such special regions as the Middle East and the Indian Ocean and the South and East China Sea (Andrews-Speed & Dannreuther, 2011), referring energy transition to a shift to the post-oil era (Zhao, 2009). And if the problem of vulnerability caused by the dependence of oil importing countries on overseas energy supply cannot be solved, some believe that this may lead to the commitment of these countries that is contrary to their own values and diplomatic goals (Kalicki & Goldwyn, 2005; Chen, 2016). Some



other perspectives argue that due to the climate change and environmental security, emphasis of energy security could also be greenhouse gas emission reduction, highlighting the substitution of such fossil energy sources as coal and oil (Zhao, 2009). Additionally, different from most developed countries, China is facing a triple transformation of energy structure at the same time—the fossil energy revolution, the electricity power revolution and the green revolution, which is also the complexity and particularity of China's energy revolution (CCIEE, 2014). In this regard, however, the future energy transition will not develop further due to the depletion of petroleum or fossil resources, nor will it simply be a political push for energy security and climate change considerations, but depending on when can price and other indicators of one or several types of new energy can exceed traditional fossil energy (Hua, 2015). Therefore, market and other economic factors weigh heavily in this regard. However, when defining energy security from a micro perspective, such elements as securing supply, demands, transit, resources endowment, geographical location, infrastructure, price and so forth are of priority to be kept in mind. In other words, these are considerations about “availability, affordability, accessibility and acceptability” as well (Cherp and Jewell, 2014). But relevance among these elements above vary a lot due to differences which lie in countries and regions, and periods of development. Hence, a country’s particular and specific scenarios weigh heavily in the discussion of energy security (Skalamera, 2015).

## **1.2 Energy security**

It can be dated back to 2010 when Chinese government listed new energy industry as one of the seven “strategic emerging industries” (SEI) (The State Council of China, 2010). In the ensuing years, the new energy industry has been positioned as a national strategic emerging industry and developed into a “pillar industry” in the national economy (The State Council of China, 2016). Certainly, energy security perceptions can vary due to objective factors ranging from resource endowment, geographical location to infrastructure and so forth. But as noted, “The concept of energy security

varies between the producer, consumer and transit states to complicate things further” (Dellecker & Tomas, 2011, p.5). Admittedly, though connotations of energy security may vary with its evolution, security of mineral resources is an important basis for the development of energy industries especially for that of the new energy industry. It has been clearly pointed out by some scholars that a large number of infrastructure and equipment need to be constructed and prepared in the course of energy transition by consuming such components and materials as solar panels, wind turbines and electric vehicles (Vidal et al., 2013). Specifically, there is a close relationship between energy and mineral resources since the development of energy industry cannot be separated from the protection of mineral resources (Grandell et al., 2016). For instance, wind energy technology mainly uses rare earth, platinum group metals, gold and silver (Habib et al., 2014; Kim et al., 2015); solar energy technology mainly uses copper, silver, platinum group metals, tellurium, indium, etc. (Grandell et al., 2016; Davidson et al., 2017); electric vehicle technology mainly uses steel, copper, aluminum, rare earth, nickel, lithium, cobalt, platinum group metals, etc. (Steinbuks et al., 2017). Hence, the security of such essential resources is of great necessity and value to be emphasized.

### **1.3 Discourse construction concerning energy transition and energy security**

Discourse is an important element of social practice (Harvey, 1995), constructing social reality and functioning with other elements such as social relations, power and material practices. From the perspective of international relations, discourse is a significant tool in safeguarding national interests, national status and power relations. Construction of discourse can help nations to maximize their expressing opinions on international affairs, so as to give play to their dominant positions and initiative in relevant fields (Liang, 2009). Specifically, from the perspective of construction of energy security, as an important part of national discourse system, energy discourse power is the extension of traditional discourse power to the certain field of energy. “Who can take the initiative in setting agenda of energy research and media reports,

constructing media discourse framework, and shaping the energy image of the country, then who can become the constructor of energy discourse (Zhai, 2014). The emphasis on the sociality of discourse is highly valued in the field of critical discourse analysis which is defined as a way of social practice and re-presentation of social reality (Fairclough, 1992; Wodak, 2001). The purposes of construction of energy discourse include building energy practice activities, arousing the attention of the audience to specific energy issues and thus attempting to affect the formulation and implementation of energy policy, which can also be related to securitization moves in regard to the concept of securitization theory under the Copenhagen School. Therefore, the construction of energy security in the course of transition plays a significant role as well.

Since critical discourse analysis is helpful to reveal the interaction between texts, discourses and society, attempting to uncover hidden connections, existing literature have studied some certain topics such as sustainable development and low-carbon society by interpreting discourses through critical discourse analysis approach (Qian, 2015; Xu, 2016). However, the review finds that there has not been much publication with the focus on some certain essential mineral resources which concerns strategic emerging industries by adopting the critical discourse analysis to study their potential construction of securitization. Thus, this thesis seeks to fill this gap.

## Chapter Two: Securitization Theory

Ole Wæver first introduced the concept of “securitization” (1995) which was further developed by Barry Buzan and Jaap de Wilde (1998) in detail in the book *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. Initially, Wæver defined security as a “speech act” which refers to a form of linguistic illustration which portrays a certain issue as an “existential threat”. Importantly, the concept of “speech act” clarifies the role of speech acts as a component of the intersubjective construction of security rather than a simply linguistic representation. “It is not interesting as a sign referring to something more real; it is the utterance itself that is the act. By saying the words, something is done” (Buzan, et al., 1998, p. 26). The original securitization concept focuses on the process of securitizing an issue, of which “the practice of securitization is the center of analysis” (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 32). Securitization was defined as “the move that takes politics beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issue either as a special kind of politics or as above politics” (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 23). In other words, securitization was presented as an intersubjective process which is a more extreme level of politicization. They maintain that any public issue can be found on a spectrum from nonpoliticized through politicized to securitized. It means from that the state does not deal with it and is not a part of the public debate to that it is presented as an existential threat, requiring emergency measures and justifying actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure (Buzan et al., pp. 23-24).

The emergence of the Copenhagen School provides security studies an idea to enlarge upon typical consideration about its fields and sectors. It is noted by Buzan et al. (1998) that “How could security complex theory be blended with the wider agenda of security studies, which covered not only the traditional military and political sectors but also the economic, societal, and environmental ones?”. Hence, a broader view towards security studies was given to attempt to conceptualize and interpret security from a wider range of fields. For the Copenhagen School, security discourse plays an important role being a constructivist approach. “Within this approach, security is considered the but come of specific social processes in which issues intersubjectively

become security issues through speech acts. Thus, security is a social construction, a self-referential social practice produced in discursive interaction” (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 204).

However, from the perspective of securitization theory, starting within/from any field(s) of security studies, several elements are of necessity and priority to be clarified in this section for further study. First of all, to declare an occurrence of existential threats is necessary for securitization moves. But it is not easy to judge the securitization of an issue against some measure of whether that issue is a real threat. According to Buzan et.al (1998), even if one could solve the measurement problem concerning objectivity of the threat, it is still “not clear that the objectivist approach would be particularly helpful” (p.30), since different states and nations have different thresholds for defining a threat. It means that results of the so-called measurement might vary disproportionately even concerning the same factor (Romero, 1990). Though Buzan et al. (1998) recognized the necessity of attempting to distinguish between subjective and objective, essentially, “security is determined by actors and in this respect is subjective”. However, the label subjective is not fully adequate, because labeling a security issue is not decided by individuals alone. Instead, securitization is “intersubjective and socially constructed (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 31), coming into being by speech. So, when a securitization is being attempted to be understood, it is the speech, the utterance, the way of how to construct it by language, instead of reality. Hence, intersubjectivity is of significance to be emphasized and observed when trying to interpret securitization.

Then, three types of units involved in security analysis are defined by Buzan et al. (1998): 1) securitizing actors are “actors who securitize issues by declaring something – a referent object – existentially threatened” (p. 36); 2) referent objects are “things that are seen to be existentially threatened and that they have a legitimate claim to survival” (p. 36). Similarly, as noted by Cherp and Jewell (2014), threats to the survival can be viewed as vulnerabilities of vital energy systems which is a combination of their exposure to risks and their resilience referring to ability to withstand disruption; and 3) functional actors are those who “affect the dynamics of a sector. Without being the

referent object or the actor calling for security on behalf of the referent object, this is an actor who significantly influences decisions in the field of security” (p. 36). Additionally, even though different actors may compete in the field of security, state actors are generally privileged by being more widely accepted voices on security issues, by having the power to define security (Buzan et al. 1998, p. 31, 37).

However, if a discourse merely presents something as an existential threat to a referent object, it is a securitizing move rather than a creation of securitization. “But the issue is securitized only if and when the audience accepts it as such” (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 25). It is also noted by Buzan et al. that the degree of demands generated is no need to be as high as that of which has to adopt emergency measure. Instead, only that “the existential threat has to be argued and just gain enough resonance for a platform to be made from which it is possible to legitimize emergency measures or other steps that would not have been possible had the discourse not taken the form of existential threats, point of no return, and necessity” is necessary to meet the needs of being accepted by the audience. If no such acceptance exists, there will be discussions only about a securitizing move other than that of an object actually being securitized (1998, p. 25). As reiterated by Buzan and Wæver, securitization is “the discursive process through which an intersubjective understanding is constructed within a political community to treat something as an existential threat ... and to enable a call for urgent and exceptional measures to deal with the threat” (2003, p. 491). In addition, as Balzacq puts it, to “analyze—among others—the securitizing actor (who made the claims about the existence of existential threats) and the discursive tools used by the securitizing actor to mobilize an audience (metaphors, emotions, stereotypes, etc.) (Balzacq, 2011, p. 35-37). Moreover, to deal with discursive practice, framing would be a useful tool, since “frames can be defined as the basic cognitive structures that guide the perception and representation of reality” (Gitlin, 1980, p. 6). Simply put, a securitizing actor presents existential threats through speech acts to an audience to demand for an acceptance of recommending extra-ordinary emergency measures. Then, if this securitizing move is accepted by the audience, it is a successful securitization. This ideal typical model

presented above is the departure point in the analysis of energy securitization in this thesis which attempts to figure out how discourses concerning specific energy resources and industries are constructed and to what extent the so-called securitizing moves are completed towards securitization.

Lastly, as referred by Buzan et al. (1998), in order to accurately locate actors, referent objects, existential threats and interactions (p. 5), it is important to first classify the level of analysis and sectors of security studies within the discussion of this thesis. Firstly, of all the five frequently used levels of analysis which include international systems, international subsystems, units, subunits, and individuals, in this thesis, units and subunits will be mainly focused as levels of analysis. According to the categorization, units refer to “actors composed of various subgroups, organization, communities and many individuals, i.e., states, nations and translational firms”; subunits refer to “organized groups of individuals within units that are able to affect the behavior of the unit. i.e., bureaucracies, lobbies” (Buzan, et al., 1998, p. 6). To be specific, in this thesis, discussions concerning energy security through discourses constructed by the actor of China as a nation from the level of units and by that of China’s Ministries as bureaucracies and state-owned enterprises (SOE, which is considered as a partial subunit in a Chinese context) from the level of subunits. Secondly, Buzan set out sectors in security analysis, including military, political, economic, societal and environmental security (1991, pp. 19-21). Among them, “Economic security concerns access to the resources, finance and markets necessary to sustain acceptable levels of welfare and state power. Societal security concerns the sustainability... Environmental security concerns the maintenance of the local and the planetary biosphere as the essential support system on which all other human enterprises depend” (Buzan, et al., 1998, p. 8). Hence, in terms of sectors discussed in this thesis, the categorization of sectors is not able to be constrained to a certain sector since the scope of discussions covers factors ranging from climate change, sustainability, energy transition, mineral resources to the new-energy industry in a logically and progressively increasing way. Therefore, several sectors will be involved

in combination in the discussion of energy discourse.

Considering that speech act is an important element of the securitization theory, though as mentioned before that only constructing an issue as an existential threat but without acceptance from the audience is not sufficient to be declared as securitization, it is reasonable to obtain a general idea of this linguistics theory and how such a linguistic analytical approach is related to a theory of international relations studies. The speech act theory was developed in the 1960s by a group of language philosophers in Britain, most importantly J. L. Austin. As what can be tell from its name, “speech act theory treats an utterance as an act performed by a speaker in a context with respect to an addressee” (Traugott & Pratt, 1980, p. 229). It is noted by Austin (1962) that performing a speech act involves 1) a “locutionary” act, the act of producing a recognizable grammatical utterance in the language; and 2) an “illocutionary” act, the attempt to accomplish some communicative purpose, for instance, promising, warning, reminding and commanding (Traugott & Pratt, 1980, p. 229). In addition, though “phonology, syntax, and semantics focus on the locutionary act while pragmatics focuses on the illocutionary act, the aspect of the speech act which specifies what the language is being used for on a given occasion”. Importantly, “a speaker’s communicative competence includes not just knowledge of what illocutionary acts can be performed in the language, but also how, when, where and by whom they can be performed” (Traugott & Pratt, 1980, p. 229-231). As for energy security in terms of speech act, it is noted by Jonna Nyman that energy security seems to be “something different from uttering security in relation to energy. While energy security is sometimes securitized, it often is not, despite being the subject of consistent security speech-acts by elite actors” (Nyman, 2013, p. 1).

Overall, though it is not always to be able to generate outcomes, studying speech acts and language in a general view may help to identify certain conceptual changes (Wæver, 2008).



## Chapter Three: Methodology

The purpose of the present chapter is to provide a detailed discussion of the methodological framework, especially why critical discourse analysis is a suitable method for the examination of the research question.

### 3.1 Case selection and background

Rare earth as a strategic resource has played a crucial role in the development of green economy and its industry consumption and production accordingly (Ifri, 2019; Schmid, 2019). Specifically, rare earth element and its compounds are important active components in functional materials for their unique electronic structure and physiochemical properties. Almost all functional materials involve rare earths, especially in electronic, magnetic, optical, and catalytic fields which are directly influencing such green industries as wind turbines, lighting devices, and electric vehicles (Azimi, 2013). China has been proven that its rare earth reserves are the most abundant in the world. Meanwhile, China's variety, quality, output and export volume of rare earths often rank first among other countries (U.S. Geological Survey, 2017), playing a vital role in global rare earth supply. The recent statistics provided by the U.S. Geological Survey 2020 report shows that China's rare earth mine production increased from 120,000 (tons) in 2018 to 132,000 in 2019, with a total reserve of 44,000,000 (U.S. Geological Survey, 2020). Considering that China is of prominent advantage of the reserve and production of rare earth worldwide, rare earth is selected as a case in this thesis for further discussion. What is more, since the focus of discussions under this research question is the strategic relevance of rare earth and its application in energy transition rather than rare earth itself as a mineral resource, a completed supply chain of rare earth will be analyzed to obtain a holistic picture of rare earth industry from its upstream sector to downstream one, attempting to pinpoint advantages and challenges of the rare earth industry to its end users' application in energy transition.

However, though China is in relative abundance in rare earth elements, it is still facing multiple challenges concerning not only internal sustainable development

problems such as relevant industries being less standardized and environmental damage, but also such external challenges as market competition and trade conflicts with the U.S.

On the one hand, internally, starting from problems that rare earth industry in China is less standardized and not sufficiently sustainable. Chinese government keeps carrying out a sequence of measures to try to figure this problem out. In response to such a series of phenomena as the out-of-order development of rare earth industry, excessive export volume, low export prices, and severe environmental damage (i.e. heavy metals and radioactive elements pollute soil, groundwater and surrounding environment) (Gao & Zhou, 2011), China has gradually strengthened the control of rare earth mining, separation processing, and export quotas, and continuously raised the entry threshold for rare earth collection and processing to accelerate mergers and acquisitions among enterprises. Specifically, in order to strictly control the quantity of rare earth exports, China decided to substantially reduce the export quota of rare earths in 2004, and the export of rare earths in 2004 was rated at 65,600 tons of rare earth oxides (REO) (MOC, 2005). China's rare earths officially entered the era of issuing quota. In 2008, China further reduced the total amount of rare earth export quotas, reducing the rare earth export quota from 59,600 tons of REO in 2007 to 47,700 tons of REO in 2008, a reduction of more than 21% (MOC, 2009). Then, when it moved to 2009, "The Special Plan for the Development of Rare Earth Industry", released by the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, clearly stated that the annual export of rare earths in 2009-2015 this period of time will not exceed 35,000 tons (MIIT, 2009). At the beginning of 2015, according to the "Export License Goods Catalog 2015" issued by the Ministry of Commerce, the quota for some other products (including tungsten and) will be replaced by a set of export license systems. The export restriction policy introduced 10 years ago received worldwide attention in 2010, when China tightened its quotas, causing traders to scramble to find sources of supply, and triggered strategic concerns in Washington and Tokyo (Foreign Policy, 2019). The abolition of quotas marks China's entry into the post-quota era (Qu, 2004), and China continued to

tighten its control and integration of rare earths, drastically raising resource taxes to curb large quantities of rare earth exports, thereby realizing strategic resource protection. What is more, a series of measures are introduced to attempt to tackle existing or potential environmental damage. For instance, Ministry of Environment and Ecology officially released “Emission Standards of Pollutants from Rare Earths Industry” in 2011 (MEE, 2011) in attempt to reduce pollution, save resources, and indirectly improve the economic benefits of mining enterprises. Additionally, “Several Opinions of the State Council on Promoting the Sustainable and Healthy Development of the Rare Earth Industry” was released the same year (MEE, 2011) to work on effective protection and rational use of rare earth resources as well as protection of the environment.

According to the white paper “China’s Rare Earth Status and Policies” issued by the State Council Information Office in 2012, China has relatively rich rare earth resources, with rare earth reserves accounting for approximately 23% of the world’s total reserves. At the same time, the rapid development of China’s rare earth industry has also made important contributions to the global supply of rare earths. China takes over 90% of the world market supply with 23% of rare earth resources. Rare earth permanent magnet materials, luminescent materials, hydrogen storage materials, and polishing materials produced in China account for more than 70% of world output. China’s rare-earth materials, devices, and end products such as energy-saving lamps, micro-motors, and nickel-metal hydride batteries meet the needs of the development of high-tech industries in countries around the world, especially developed countries. It is not hard to pinpoint that development narrative in the field of rare earth development is not how to find more resources but how to maximize the utilization of such an important resource in a sustainable and profitable way.

On the other hand, externally, with the continuous development of global rare earth resources, the United States, Australia, and Canada have resumed strengthening geological exploration of rare earths (Nikkei, 2019), and emerging rare earth countries such as Vietnam, Malaysia, Greenland, and Egypt have increased their mining for rare

earth resources (British Geographical Survey, 2011). Advantageous profits for China may show a downward trend in the future. Then, when looking at Sino-US trade conflicts which are prominent in 2019, disputes reached a point where restrictions on exports on rare earths have become a possible means of sanction suggesting a current U.S. dependence on China's rare earths (BBC, 2019). Similarly, it reminds people of the previous rare earth crises caused by geopolitical tensions between Japan and China in 2010 and 2011 (New York Times, 2010). When a piece of Xinhua news responded to the possibility that the U.S. may have some actions with rare earth elements toward China, it is noted that “in today's highly globalized industrial division of labor, there can be no development and progress without synergy and cooperation. Some American politicians intend to suppress China’s development through technological restrictions. It can only be a delusion” (Xinhua, 2019). In this context, geopolitical considerations in terms of rare earth are emphasized broadly from within and without.

The intention is to investigate cases that would cover a relatively long period of time, and that would allow the examination of that to what extent a securitizing move may be “successful” or “failed”.

### **3.2 Choice of methods**

Discourse analysis is rooted in a social constructionist approach within social sciences and humanities. Considered that securitization is a discursive practice essentially where meaning of security is ascribed to non-security related objects, critical discourse analysis is chosen as the method, playing its qualitative role of study in this thesis. Critical discourse analysis mainly concerns with social problems and political issue, attempting not only to interpret but also to explain discourse structures (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). Through critical discourse analysis, specifically studies at the level of analyzing actors and linguistic features of their speeches in this thesis, it deserves research into codes and labels in texts to try to generate patterns indicating characteristics and preferences of framing, agenda setting and so on and then to further analyze their effectiveness in communication to the target audience.

Specifically, within the critical discourse analysis, the three-dimensional model built by Fairclough in his book *Discourse and Social Change* will be used as guiding principles for analysis. It is noted by him that communicative events have three dimensions: 1) a discursive practice of which attention should be drawn on how the text is produced and consumed, focusing on the way power relations are enacted; 2) a text which should be subjected to a linguistic analysis (vocabulary, grammar, syntax); 3) a social practice which show implications of how discursive practices reproduce or restructure the existing order of discourse and how it is translated into social changes (Fairclough, 1992, pp.72-73).

It is noted by Fairclough that analysis of discursive practice should involve a combination of what one might call “micro-analysis” and “macro-analysis”. He states that discursive practice research would require a mixture of what could be called “micro-analysis” and “macro-analysis”. The former is “the sort of analysis at which conversation analysts excel in: the explanation of how precisely participants produce and interpret texts based on the resources of their members” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 85). However, this must be complemented by macro-analysis so as to know “the nature of the members’ resources that is being drawn upon in order to produce and interpret texts, and whether it is being drawn upon in normative or creative ways” (ibid., p. 86). Moreover, as noted by Fairclough, the best place to uncover this information is micro-analysis: evidence is provided for macro-analysis. Hence, micro-analysis and macro-analysis are mutual requirements. Owing to their interrelationship, the aspect of discursive experience within the context of three dimensions will mediate the interaction between the dimension of social action and text: it is the micro-processes that shape the text (ibid., pp. 85-86). Thus, it is reasonable to discuss at textual level here to gather evidence from a microanalysis perspective.

Overall, the goal that Fairclough attempted to obtain by critical discourse analysis was to combine linguistic analysis of the text level and analysis of practices and procedures of the social level together, indicating a discourse analysis approach which is oriented both textually and sociologically.

However, in this thesis, though the theoretical framework is mainly constructed by the securitization theory of the Copenhagen School, here the purpose of choosing the critical discourse analysis and illustrating its framework is to make it clear that this approach is interactively useful to be adopted together with the securitization approach in the analysis to pinpoint speech which are potentially foregrounded. More importantly, it relates to a broader picture outside text and speech, interactively connecting wording to narratives and further to social practice. The critical discourse analysis approach shares a feature and objectives with the securitization theory to emphasize the importance of looking for clues from the textual level. But what is of interest and value to combine the above theoretical and analytical frameworks together in this thesis is that Fairclough's three-dimensional model can serve as an impetus for the securitization theory to relate securitizing moves integrated with narratives discussions in a macro and phenomenal way.

### **3.3 Choice of data**

Before going into detail, it is of necessity to refer to some interpretations of discourse analysis from the Copenhagen School concerning the choice of data. As noted by Wæver (2001), discourse analysis is limited to public aspects of texts (p. 26). Discourse analysis “does not try to get to the thoughts or motives of the actors, their hidden intentions or secret plans. Especially for the study of foreign policy where much is hidden, it becomes a huge methodological advantage to stay at the level of discourse” (p. 15). Instead, “what interests us is neither what individual decision makers really believe, not what are shared beliefs among a population, but which codes are used when actors relate to each other” (p. 15). Hence, it is reasonable to focus on public texts in the context of energy security in China.

In attempt to obtain a completed and consistent understanding of the construction of energy security in China, especially for that of rare earth, a time frame has been set for the study of this thesis by following China's 13<sup>th</sup> Five-year Plan which is from 2016 to 2020. Now it is almost approaching to the end of this five-year session of

development. Thus, it is possible to look into details of its outcomes and also reasonable to make a comparison between the general planning at the beginning and its realization in the last phase of this session.

Both primary and secondary sources will be used in this thesis. Based on categorization of energy discourse, governmental or institutional energy discourse and media energy discourse will be studied. To be specific, energy plans, policies, regulations on energy issues from governmental discourse level and energy-related news reports and column comments from media discourse will be studied as materials.

In addition, the energy discourse of enterprises especially for SOEs is also of value to be studied, which is represented by the energy enterprises' reports, the articles of energy-related issues on the company website/self-media, interviews of the enterprise practitioners. However, overlapping claims may exist: for instance, the academic energy discourse, including journal articles, treatises, academic conferences or forums related to energy issues. This constitutes a classification system based on the main body of energy discourse production, in which the categories are not one-to-one relations, and there will be overlaps under certain circumstances. For example, though in some cases it seems that the media is releasing some energy-related policies, it is essentially constructed by the governmental level.

Then, another important point is about how to select and handle concrete data. A model was noted by Wæver (2005) that when doing discourse analysis, it consists of synchronic and diachronic components (p. 39). These two concepts were theorized by Ferdinand de Saussure in his book *Course in General Linguistics* published in 1916. It is noted that methods of diachrony and synchrony differ. Synchrony has only one perspective, the speakers', and its whole method consists of gathering evidence from speakers; to know to just what extent a thing is a reality. On the contrary, diachrony must distinguish both "prospective", following the course of time and "retrospective", going back in time (p. 90). In regard to the study of this thesis, especially how to handle different kinds of data, a combination of synchronic and diachronic perspective will be used.

### 3.4 Choice of analytical tools

To help carry out the qualitative study, such program as NVivo is utilized to undertake analysis of relevant data. Seven types of analysis could present, namely, constant comparison analysis, keywords-in-context, word count, classical content analysis, domain analysis, taxonomic analysis, and componential analysis. Moreover, regardless of the type of qualitative data or the type of research design, NVivo can be used to conduct the analysis (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2011). Thus, NVivo is appropriated and helpful to be adopted as an analytical tool.

### 3.5 Limitations

The following limitations may exist in this thesis.

Firstly, since one of the focuses of this thesis is the construction of discourse in a Chinese context, materials produced by the Chinese government and other sectors in China are reasonable to be utilized for analyses. But due to the fact that not all materials are available for official versions both in Chinese and English. Thus, it is unavoidable that some materials have to be translated by the author of this thesis to make them possible for further research and discussions. However, considering that discourse and text-related discussions play a very important role in this thesis under its theoretical and analytical frameworks, indeed, it is fair enough to accept the possibility that the author is constructing a so-called “discourse” as well while doing some translation needed. The only possible solution to handle this limitation in the thesis is attempting to reproduce ideas and diction from source language texts as faithful as possible into target language texts by such tactics as adopting similar usage from documents with an official background, ensuring consistency of style and wording, and avoiding unintentional creation of personal bias in the target language text.

Admittedly, languages are self-contained systems (Oller, 1971), making it impossible to obtain absolute equivalents between different languages. But as noted by Wierzbicka (1991), instead of looking for “absolute universals”, it is able to find some “partial universals” and correspondences even though “two languages do not have



identical networks of relationships of signs” (p. 10). In addition, it is necessary to clarify that what should be emphasized in the discussion of this thesis is illocutionary force rather than linguistic style and others. Simply put, since an absolute translation is impossible to be obtained between any languages, it is acceptable for some potential existence of different interpretations and reproduction between the source language and the target language in the translation. However, given the amount of primary and secondary sources in English, the acknowledgement of this deficiency does not prevent this research from being effective.

Secondly, methodologically, due to the lack of resources and access to the subjects of this study, it is not possible to create such original data as interviews and observations. Hence, data to be analyzed in this project is merely based on such existing data as official reports, publications and so on.

## Chapter Four: Analysis

In this chapter, analysis will follow the Fairclough's three-dimensional analytical model (1992), to investigate the relationship between discourses constructed in selected documents and social practices in the field of energy security.

### **4.1 To relate internally: sustainable development narrative**

To sustainable development narrative theme mainly concerns about a series of problems emerged from the rare earth industry. The phenomenon of illegal mining and production without planned indicators still exists to some extent now in China, the production order of the rare earth industry needs to be further standardized; and importantly existing and potential environmental damage which may be caused by inaction of the governmental level. The textual analysis of the speech acts under investigation is charged with the task of locating such articulations concerning the issue of importance of discourse of energy security and that of the rare earth.

#### **4.1.1 "Rare earth is an important strategic resource"**

In 2019, Chinese President Xi Jinping inspected Jiangxi from May 20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup>, presiding over a seminar to promote the rise of the central region and delivering an important speech. It is cleared noted by him during this visit that "Rare earth is an important strategic resource and a non-renewable resource. It is necessary to increase the intensity of scientific and technological innovation, continuously improve the technical level of development and utilization, extend the industrial chain, increase added value, strengthen environmental protect, and achieve green and sustainable development" (Xinhua News, 2019).

This speech can be considered as a foregrounding from the highest level of the Chinese government, considering that Jiangxi Jinli Permanent Magnetic Technology Co., Ltd. is an outstanding representative of the rare earth industry in China. So, the action that Xi comes and delivers a speech fundamentally carries information that the rare earth industry and its pillar enterprises are receiving great attention from the central

government. What is more, it can also be interpreted as a signal that the rare earth industry is of endorsement from the highest level of Chinese government when encountering potential rival the U.S. in the ongoing so-called trade war.

In addition, Xi emphasized that “Technological innovation is the lifeblood of an enterprise. Only with independent intellectual property rights and core technologies can we produce products with core competitiveness and be invincible in the fierce competition. It is necessary to tightly hold the strategic basis of technological innovation, master more core technologies, and seize the commanding heights of the industry development” (Xinhua News, 2019).

The emphasis on technological innovation in a speech located in a rare earth industry may shed some light on existential threat in this industry to some degree. To specify, the wording of “lifeblood”, “invincible” and “fierce competition” showcases that this external environment in terms of a global view has been formed already. That means what left for China, specifically for the rare earth industry in this context, is to find a way to attempt to handle it with resources available in hand rather than looking for other chances to construct another narrative or discourse which is actively dominated by China. The nature of this threat is that no single country can escape from making effort to deal with it and also work well with it. It is the task of China’s rare earth industry to seek for technological innovation as a crucial objective, especially considering domestic development not being in an order as well as existing and potential environmental damage. Actually, the concept of “technological innovation” is frequently and widely used in the domestic context. What is of interest is that, apparently in this stage, at least for the technological development level, such threat should not be interpreted as a “real” threat for China. Indeed, it becomes more and more important to modern development of any country especially for China as a rapidly developing country. However, this “threat” and its relevant wording and narrative are widely emerging from within in a long time. Combining textual and macro discursive consideration, for sustainable development of rare earth industry, a securitizing move may be emphasized not mainly by illustrating an existential threat but by arousing a

previously existed feeling and consideration about this “threat” in a narrative to ensure the audience again to self-confirm their reaction and interpretation of such speech acts.

#### **4.1.2 “Positive effect of promoting development and utilization of REE”**

Similarly, in 2019, Meng Wei, spokesman for the National Development and Reform Commission stated that “China is the country with the largest reserves of rare earths in the world and the largest producer. Under this background, strengthening the development and utilization of rare earth resources has an important positive effect on the development of China’s economy and the world economy” (CCTV, 2019). What is more, he also stated that in response to the current illegal production of rare earth industry, “the industry will increase efforts to rectify and standardize, build a long-term supervision mechanism, and regulate the development order of the industry”. In response to the historical debts of the rare earth industry's ecological and environmental protection issues, it will “solidly promote mine ecological restoration and environmental governance, and promote the green development of the rare earth industry” (CCTV, 2019).

From this extract from official level, in order to promote the high-quality development of the rare earth industry, the National Development and Reform Commission pinpoints a generally sustainable development plan for the rare earth industry by hearing and collecting opinions from scholars, researchers, key enterprises and relevant locals. It can be considered as a kind of speech act of explaining by responding how to deal with different kinds of problems by a sequence of measures. However, the “urgency” of taking extra-ordinary measures lies in the macro social practice perspective. It is the existing narrative of developing towards sustainability that is attempting to convince the audience to accept such measures to improve the rare earth industry by speeding up the development of it with a reasonable industrial structure, advanced technology, effective resource protection and orderly production and operation. Again, it is argued that existing narrative is an impetus sometimes to arouse

the audience to a level that accepting speech act of some challenges as a legitimized way to take measures accordingly.

### **4.1.3 “Promoting the revolution in energy production and consumption is a long-term strategy”**

Chinese President Xi Jinping presided over the sixth meeting of the Central Financial Leading Group on June 13<sup>th</sup> 2014 and delivered an important speech. Xi emphasized that energy security is a global and strategic issue that affects the economic and social development of the country, and is crucial to the prosperity and development of the country, the improvement of people's lives, and long-term social stability. Specifically, Xi states five points in detail:

“First, promote the energy consumption revolution and curb unreasonable energy consumption. Resolutely control the total amount of energy consumption, effectively implement the priority policy of energy conservation, implement energy conservation throughout the entire process of economic and social development and various fields, [...].

Second, promote the energy supply revolution and establish a multiple supply system. Based on domestic diversified supply and security, vigorously promote the clean and efficient use of coal, focus on the development of non-coal energy, form a multi-wheel-driven energy supply system for coal, oil, gas, nuclear, new energy, and renewable energy, and simultaneously strengthen the energy transmission and distribution network and construction of reserve facilities.

Third, promote the energy technology revolution and drive industrial upgrading. Based on China's national conditions, keeping up with the new trend of the international energy technology revolution, taking green and low-carbon as the direction, promote technological innovation, industrial innovation, [...].

Fourth, promote the revolution of the energy system and open up the fast lane for energy development. Unswervingly promote reforms, restore the attributes of energy commodities, build an effective competitive market structure and market system, form a mechanism where the market mainly determines energy prices, transform the government's supervision of energy, and establish a sound energy law system.

Fifth, strengthen international cooperation in all directions to

achieve energy security under open conditions. Under the precondition of being mainly based in China, we will strengthen international cooperation in all aspects involved in the energy production and consumption revolution, and make effective use of international resources”

Promoting the revolution in energy production and consumption is a long-term strategy, and we must start from the present and accelerate the implementation of key tasks and major measures (Xi, 2014).

Only the most relevant sentences are quoted above. Though it is not a speech delivered directly concerning the rare earth industry, it does not undermine the importance of this speech. In other words, it could be understood as a markable speech because “revolution” is firstly adopted by Xi to refer to energy production and consumption. What deserves an analysis here is because “revolution” in Chinese context often plays an important role and position. “Revolution” is not prominent in the discourse of 21th century’s China anymore. However, there is still a seemingly vague but deeply rooted sense in Chinese language and cultural background. Originally, “revolution” this term did not emerge from Chinese. It is a borrowed word which was widely spread then by the popularization of a book namely Revolutionary Army written by Zou Rong, in 1900s. He adopted western national revolution theory as the main weapon, and expounded the justice and necessity of revolution from the front (China Daliy, 2018). From then on, “revolution” gradually becomes a word with heavy memories of historical events, such as Xinhai Revolution. Back to Xi’s speech again, it does not directly point out threat; instead, it suggests in a sound but natural way by using an existing narrative which has long been rooted in the targeted audience from within. Thus, in the face of new changes in the pattern of energy supply and demand, there are new trends in international energy development. So, protection of national energy security, the energy production and consumption revolution must be promoted.

## **4.2 To relate externally: geopolitical narrative**

## 4.2.1 “China has nearly lost its pricing power in the international trade system”

It is first argued that China has lost the ability to set the rare earth elements prices. According to the Rare Earth Information Journal, “what China buys becomes expensive; what China sells becomes cheap.” Similarly, it is stated by a spokesman of Ministry of Commerce (2011), “China has nearly lost its pricing power in the international trade system”. What can be interpreted from such narrative is that the efficient development and utilization of rare earths can effectively promote the upgrading of China's multi-field industries and realize the rise of many emerging strategic industries, which is of great significance to national development. Thus, when it has been realized that the power of pricing such an important resource, to portray it as a threat, referring clearly that it is losing benefits, can be considered as an effort for securitization.

Then, according to “Twelve Departments Announcement on Continuously Strengthening Rectification of Rare Earth Industry Order”, a general requirement is raised to further standardize market order and improve the quality of industry development, facing such problems as private rare earth mining and unplanned production which seriously interfere with the market order and the normal production and operation activities of legal enterprises.

“Adhere to the guidance of Xi Jinping's socialist ideology with Chinese characteristics in the new era, fully implement the spirit of the 19th National Congress of the CPC and the Second and Third Plenary Sessions of the 19th CPC Central Committee, firmly establish a new development concept, adhere to the supply-side structural reform as the main line, and focus on private excavation and mining, processing illegal rare earth mineral products and other prominent problems that disrupt the order of the industry, increase investigation and punishment, focus on establishing a normalized working mechanism, and carry out supervision throughout the entire process of rectification according to law, and effectively implement the Group's management and control responsibilities and local supervision responsibilities, obtaining the order in rare earth mining, production, circulation and import and export, realizing a stable and reasonable product prices, green and environmentally friendly resource utilization, continuous

improvement of development quality, and effective support of the rare earth resources strategy” (MITT, 2019).

The above extract clearly indicate that decisive and unprecedented action is urgently needed in order to strengthen standardization of the rare earth industry. The wording of “establishing a normalized working mechanism” can be interpreted as ensuing that previously “unusual” actions will be settled down as a normal style, suggesting that additional and extra-ordinary actions are of necessity and reason to be adopted. Throughout the text, efforts needed to support the rare earth resources strategy is constructed as an issue which requires increased attention and priority, while calls for immediate action of the consequences of inaction or disorder are explicit.

#### **4.2.2. “Will REE become a ‘secret weapon’ for China in the Sino-US trade war?”**

Another case is the “weaponization” of rare earth in trade conflicts between China and the U.S. There are rare earth mines in the United States, but it takes at least a few years to extract them and establish a relevant complete industrial chain. The rare earth products stored by the U.S. are generally estimated to be used for only a few months. Australia and other U.S. allies also produce rare earths, but the output and the completeness of products are incomparable to China. Thus, once the Chinese rare earth is out of this game, the U.S. will definitely face great adjustment difficulties. Simply put, though the U.S. is also threatening China by restriction, this weaponized move in the context of China can be considered as a move to convince its audience to accept any extra-ordinary measure to counter with the U.S.’ next step of actions. Thus, in the domestic context, it is not as that in the U.S. context that if China takes is as a weapon, such restrictions will affect China’s reputation as a stable supplier. Instead, on the contrary, by portraying the stance in a solid and firm tone, China constructed a unified opinion by legitimizing such measures as “no intend to fight with the U.S. but definitely will not fear about it”. Actually, a discourse and narrative of confirmation is constructed in this case in order to securitize. It is clear that China does not want to escalate the



trade war, but if the U.S. repeatedly takes extreme actions, China has supports from its domestic discourse to fight back. In this case, China will act rashly instead of taking revenge.

“Weapon” as a word which could be categorized as terms used in the context of war or self-defense. It creates a picture that though there are existential threats generated by the U.S. in trade conflicts, there is no absolute move that can put China into a dilemma since it controls the “secret weapon”. However, if the trade war continues according to the intensified momentum, it will definitely have an increasingly serious chain reaction to global production and consumption. This responsibility will undoubtedly be borne by the U.S. according to the construction of such a “weapon” discursive practice, legitimizing China is with just and with international morality and rules.

#### **4.2.3 “If anyone attempts to use Chinese REE to suppress China's development, we also firmly oppose it”**

As mentioned before, in 2019, Meng Wei, spokesman for the National Development and Reform Commission stated a series of notes, from the geopolitical perspective, it deserves another look here. Regarding whether rare earths will become a means of Sino-US economic and trade friction countermeasures, Meng Wei said that the current global industrial chain is closely connected and interlocked, and there will be no development and progress without cooperation. “China has been actively maintaining the multilateral trading system, supporting economic globalization, adhering to the principles of openness, coordination and sharing, and promoting the development of China's rare earth industry. It is willing to meet the legitimate needs of the world's development with rare earth resources and products. However, mutual benefit and win-win requires the sincerity of all parties to maintain”. Importantly, “Certain countries ignore world trade rules and undermine the global industrial chain. We are firmly opposed to this. If anyone attempts to use Chinese rare earth resources to

manufacture products to curb and suppress China's development, we also firmly oppose it”.

What can be seen from it is that the attempt of framing existing problem of geopolitical locations and reserves, the defining process of such problems, the perdition of potential situation, i.e. other countries will take advantage of China’s rare earth reserve to develop their capacity and then come back to suppress China’s development. Such framing is combining textual and social practice together to make a sound voice that tracing the securitizing move starting from an existential threat.

## Conclusion

The thesis conducts a discourse analysis of how China constructs its energy security from within, especially the security of the rare earth elements and related industries. After giving a background for the energy transition as a general trend and energy security as a crucial issue for China, especially of some certain mineral resources. The research is guided by the theoretical framework of the securitization theory and the analytical framework of the critical discourse analysis.

For this thesis, securitization theory is chosen as the theoretical framework. It is applied to the analysis to achieve a deepened understanding of energy security in the course of a global energy transition. This theory is also utilized to ensure that aspects from issue areas, attempts, etc. are covered adequately in the answer of the problem formulation. Moreover, within the critical discourse analysis, the three-dimensional model built by Fairclough are used as guiding principles for analysis. Since, the critical discourse analysis approach shares a feature and objectives with the securitization theory to emphasize the importance of looking for clues from the textual level. The combination of use in this thesis reasonable to achieve outcome when analyzing energy security by associating social practice.

After analyzing certain extracts from the context of Chinese discourse, this thesis argues that narrative constructed already in the society and its audience, plays an important role when arousing the audience's acceptance to a comprehended framing of existential threat. Security language is used to communicate a sense of urgency in order to influence a discussion and attention from the audience. It is concluded from the thesis that there is not necessary to generate a completely new construction of discourse to ensure energy security. Instead, adopting previously roots and existed narratives may also be effective to convince the audience to accept extra-ordinary measures by legitimizing some existing or potential moves to encounter the so-called existential threat.

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